

William Simpson would be incomplete without the 116 Club. This place was his home away from home. It was where he was comfortable. Here he was surrounded by people he truly loved. The people in this room carried him throughout his life. He loved this place. Here were people he truly admired—always sharing good stories and, of course, good food! Once again, we are grateful for your presence here today. It is such a moving testament to my father and we thank you.

My father was my closest and most faithful friend. My sister Ellen and I were extremely fortunate, in these times when people thirst for a hero and role model, we didn't have to look very far. We just looked to my father. He was a great father, not only to my sister and me, but as a leader and mentor for so many people—many who are here today.

My father was one of the most genuinely modest people that I have ever known. He never stood above people. He never forgot where he came from, and he never forgot or lost sight of his mission to serve—to serve others unselfishly. From his early days in the family seafood factory in Gulfport, Mississippi, he rose to work for the President of the United States, but he never lost his touch with his common roots.

My father was a faithful and loyal husband for over 56 years to our mother, Evelyn. Faithful and loyal are words used most to describe him. It is fitting that he was laid to rest in the hallowed ground at Arlington National Cemetery, surrounded by veterans who have faithfully served this country. Our father took the oath of service to the United States of America to heart—it set the course for the rest of his life. Being “faithful and loyal” were not mere commodities to be used when it was popular, and then to be cast aside or compromised when it became a burden. These ideals were at the core of the fabric that represented the character of our father. He was “faithful and loyal” all his life—when he wore his uniform, when he served Governor Johnson, Senator Eastland, President Carter and his beloved home state of Mississippi and most importantly his family and friends.

He would tell me a story many times over in my life and he would say, “Bill, some of our friends die, and I wish we could do something about it, but we can't, that's life, but what we can control in this life is how you treat your friends. You never quit your friends, even if they lose an election, or are in trouble, or are in need. That's when you need to be there.”

For many of us here, he was our Atticus Finch, our backstop, always there with support and counsel, never having to look over your shoulder, because you knew he was there. My father was a man of character and courage. A great author once said “courage is grace under pressure.” If that is the case, this man was filled with grace.

In the tough times in Mississippi during the Civil Rights Era, my father provided sound, courageous leadership. I know that he prevented bloodshed across the state. He was color-blind when it wasn't popular to be so. I attribute this to his strong faith and love for humanity.

Money, fame and power meant nothing to him. He understood the proper use of power to help people, not for self-interest, but as a tool for service; especially for the under-represented. He would captivate crowds with his words and passion. He was gracious, kind, and gentle. He always kept a low profile, while maintaining unshakeable integrity. He was in every sense an American treasure.

As Senator Kennedy stated last week on the floor of the Senate, “Seeing him so often reminded me of those happy times when the

Senate was full of friendships and goodwill in spite of huge disagreements on the issues. I know the beautiful memories of his long and productive life will last forever.”

We also received a note from Hiram Eastland who told his story better than I can—“What a wonderful life and wealth of friends he had. He deeply touched and brought joy and inspiration to the lives of many people . . . a legendary bedrock character with spirit and good humor . . . keen on Mississippi and Washington insight and stories that will live on in our memories. No man ever loved his family or his state or country more, and no man ever understood, enjoyed, or knew better how to engage and practice the art of politics for the public good than Bill Simpson”.

As we say goodbye to this fine and decent man, let us take comfort in his accomplishments and most importantly remember the impact he had on our lives.

In closing, I would like to use one of my father's favorite quotes that I think really defined his character—

The thoughts of others were light and fleeting.

Of lover's meeting or luck or fame.

Mine were of trouble and mine were steady. So I was ready when trouble came.

My Father was ready.

Thank you.

1Bill Simpson, III, January 12, 2004.

BILL'S TABLE

When we gathered at Bill's table we knew from that twinkle and grin that we were wrapped warm in his welcome. We knew that friendship mattered most, and that our politics could be checked at the door. We knew our day was about to get better because we were going to spend an hour with someone very special. We all knew we were about to be enriched—kindred spirits listening and laughing and learning with Bill.

Yes, we listened, we laughed, and we learned. He told us of Governors and sheriffs, of gamblers and rebels, of saints and scoundrels, of Committee Chairmen and of Chairman's Representatives. We heard about politics and politicians and public servants. We learned about Bay of St. Louis and Gulfport and Pass Christian, and, oh, yes, about the wrath of the terrible Camille; he talked of the Mighty River—its mischief and its majesty. Bill shared stories of his Pacific comrades—heroes who saved the world in an Ocean half a world away; of the Chepachet and her amphibious campaigns; of battles and of brave men.

He spoke with quiet admiration of those who defined who he was—his family most of all, but also of a Governor named Johnson, of a Senator named Eastland, and of a President named Carter. We heard about the Old South and the New South—this Son of Mississippi had a big hand in both. He talked of striving to build bridges, of civil rights; of justice and of the Department of Justice; of compassion and of reconciliation; of understanding and of progress.

But those were all words, and the essence of Bill was not what he said, but who he was. Much more important than his words were what we learned from Bill—and in the spirit of his own lively metaphors the images of his life lessons for us will keep coming back.

We learned from Bill that character could be as strong and deep-rooted as his State's live oaks, and that friendships should be as durable and as sweet as an aged bourbon. We learned that trust should be as strong as the Great River levees his generation helped build, and that the embrace of a friend could be as warm as a Delta summer.

We learned that loyalty could be as fierce as a Gulf storm, and personal presence as

gentle as a family prayer. My own prayer now is that my sons will always have a Bill Simpson in their lives.

We thought Bill always would be at his table. Well, take heart. He is still there, and he will be, next month—and next year. There will be no new stories—only those we know by heart—at least 116 of them. And in time they will become richer—as will we—because we had a place at Bill's table.

David Lambert, January 12, 2004

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:55 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to section 214(a) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15344), the Minority Leader appoints Willie L. Brown, Jr., of San Francisco, California, to the Election Assistance Commission Board of Advisors. Mr. Brown is appointed for a 2-year term.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2001 (Public Law 106-398), the Minority Leader reappoints Ms. Carolyn Bartholomew of the District of Columbia, for a 2-year term that expires December 31, 2005, to the United States-China Review Commission.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 491 of the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1098(c)), the order of the House of December 8, 2003, and upon the recommendation of the Minority Leader, the Speaker appoints the following member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance for a 3-year term: Mr. Robert Shireman of Oakland, California.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 3:50 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by one of its clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 2673. An act making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.